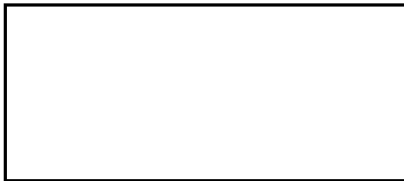


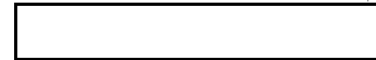
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26 January 1962

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26 January 1962

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CONTENTS

1. Laos: Several enemy battalions moving against strategic government military base. (*Page i*)

25X1



6. USSR: Continuing popular ferment seen in audience reactions to public lecture in Moscow. (*Page tv*)

25X1



9. Iran: Shah giving Amini government strong backing in handling current unrest. (*Page v*)

(Continued)

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Approved For Release 2003/03/10 : CIA-RDP79T00975A006200060001-6

26 January 1962

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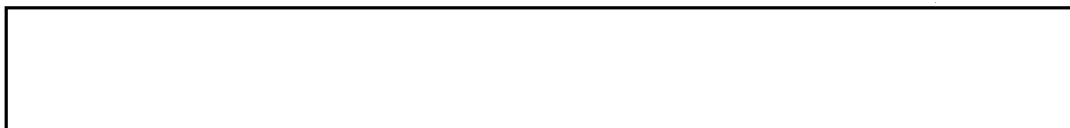
CONTENTS
(Continued)



25X1

11. Venezuela: Betancourt government under further strain as a result of recent violence in Caracas and other major cities. (*Page vi*)

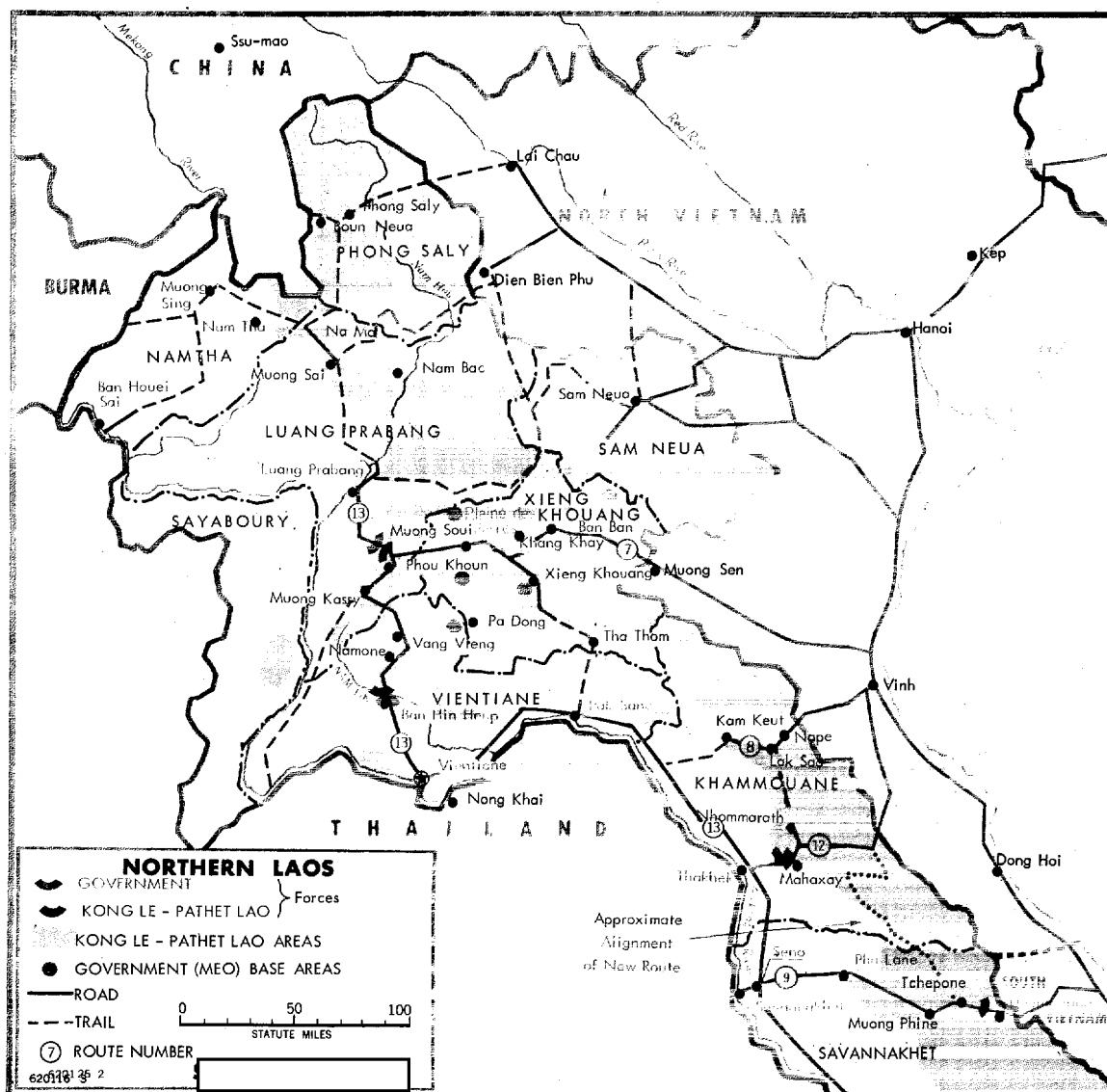
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13. East Germany: Premier Ulbricht's remarks concerning proposals in Soviet memorandum to Bonn's ambassador in Moscow. (*Page vii*)

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/03/10 : CIA-RDP79T00975A006200060001-6



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

26 January 1962

DAILY BRIEF

25X1

*Laos: [Information as of 0430 EST) An enemy threat appears to be shaping up against Nam Tha, a provincial capital and strategic government military base in northwestern Laos. Several enemy battalions, probably including at least one North Vietnamese unit, have advanced within a few miles south of Nam Tha, having outflanked two defending government battalions earlier this week east of the town. The present threat to Nam Tha is a continuation of the strong reaction to efforts by Phoumi's forces last December to capture Muong Sai, an important base in northern Luang Prabang Province. In early January, other government forces southwest of Muong Sai were driven back to the Mekong River west of Luang Prabang; last weekend government forces were forced out of Na Mo, a post northwest of Muong Sai. North Vietnamese forces in support of the Pathet Lao are believed to have played an important role in these operations.]

[The enemy may not intend to push its advantage to the point of seizing Nam Tha, although the Communists might view this as an opportunity to make Phoumi more tractable at the conference table without risking as strong a reaction as would result from an offensive against a more important center.]

[A review of previous reports leads us to believe that the number of North Vietnamese troops in Laos is now up to about 9,000. Reports indicate there are probably 10 North Vietnamese combat battalions, consisting of possibly as many as 5,000.]

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[] troops, operating on Laotian territory. In addition, it is believed there are probably as many as 2,000 North Vietnamese troops assigned as cadres to the Kong Le/Pathet Lao forces, and up to 2,000 more with headquarters, engineer, signal, and other support elements in Laos.

25X1 [] Aerial photography [] January in the Plaine des Jarres area--where 25 tanks were identified in aerial photography in December--showed three artillery pieces tentatively identified as 152-mm. gun/howitzers. These would be the first heavy artillery pieces detected with the Communist forces, which are known to have 85-mm. and 105-mm. artillery pieces and mortars up to 120-mm. [] (Map) []

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26 Jan 62

DAILY BRIEF

1-a

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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2003/03/10 : CIA-RDP79T00975A006200060001-6

25X1

USSR: During a public lecture in Moscow on 22 January the audience asked several unusually pointed questions and interjected critical comments about Stalin's terror, the number of government and party jobs held by Khrushchev, and the regime's handling of de-Stalinization. According to the US Embassy, such questioning is illustrative of continuing popular ferment engendered by Khrushchev's anti-Stalin campaign. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] (Backup, Page 1)

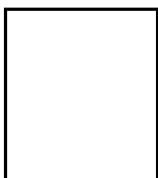
26 Jan 62

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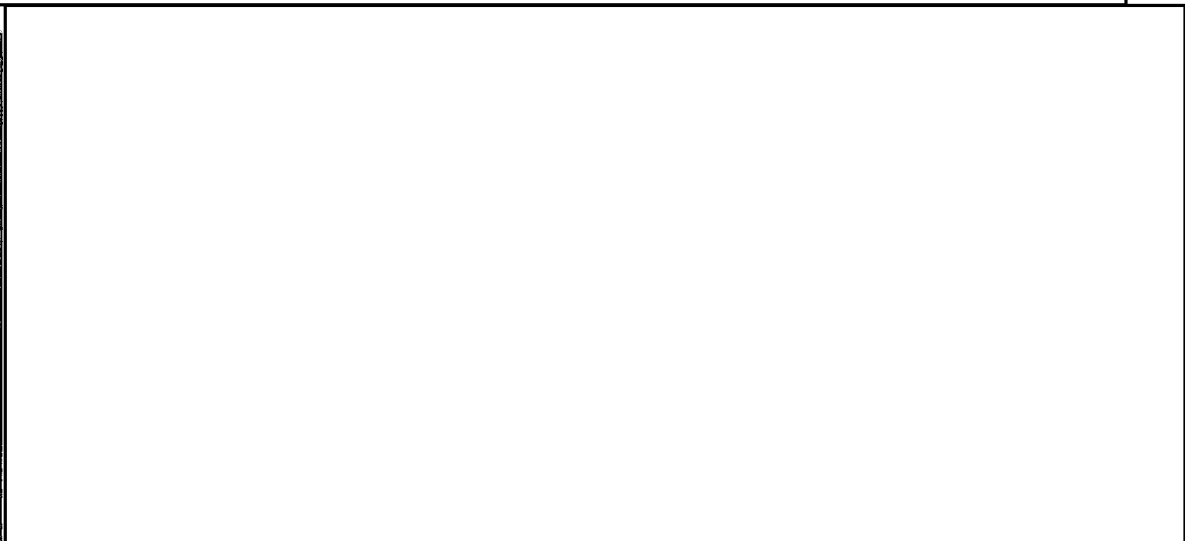
iv

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Iran: The Shah is giving Premier Amini strong backing in handling current antiregime unrest, and government firmness in dealing with student demonstrations and other protests have thus far prevented serious deterioration of the security situation.

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26 Jan 62

DAILY BRIEF

v

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Venezuela: Although the violence which broke out in Caracas on 22 January subsided on 25 January, recent developments in Venezuela have subjected Betancourt's coalition government to further strain. The split in the President's own party continues, and [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] growing sentiment favoring withdrawal from the coalition because of Christian Socialist

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26 Jan 62

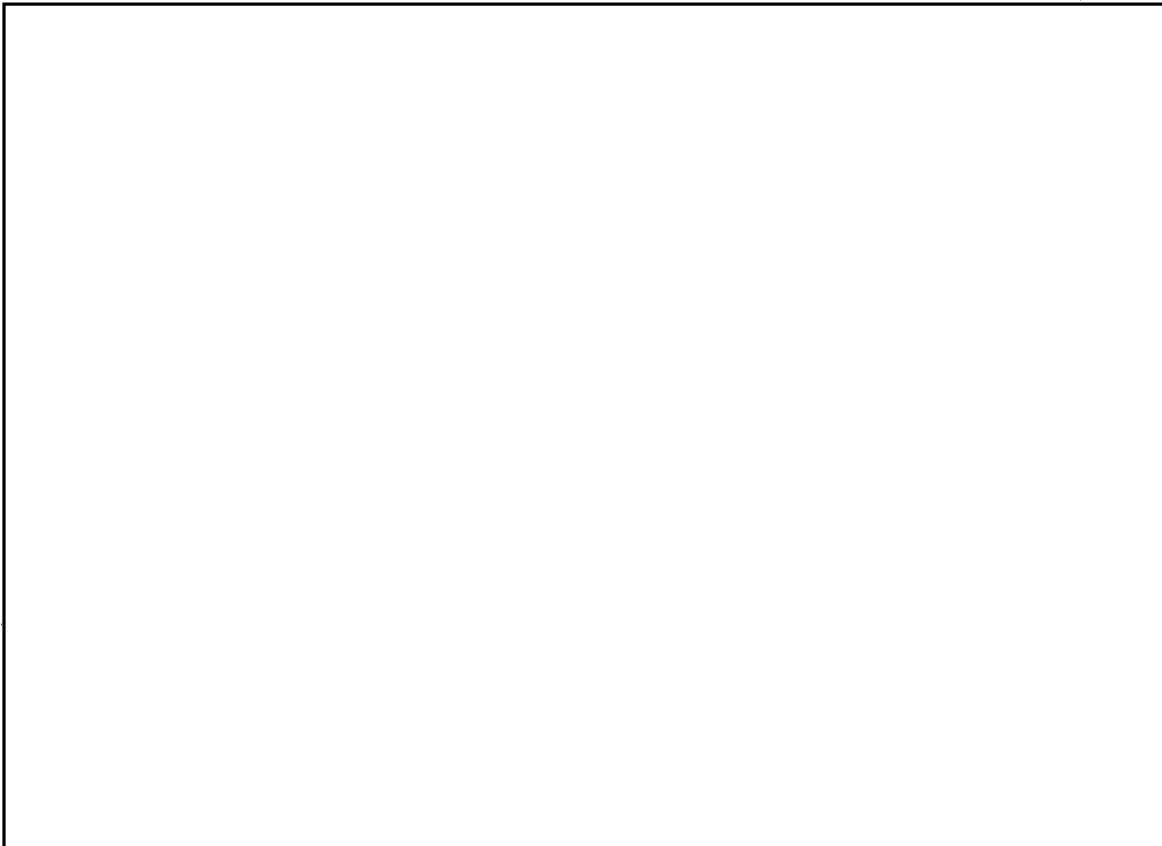
DAILY BRIEF

vi

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25X1 leaders' disgust over the government's inability to control the violence. Discontent is also reported among military officers, who feel the government has prevented them from handling the situation in a more forceful manner. Some officers are reportedly convinced that continuation of the unrest would make it necessary for them to overthrow the government. They are hesitant to make such a move, however, because they believe that the US Government is opposed to a military takeover. 25X1



*East Germany: Ulbricht's remarks to the East German People's Chamber on 24 January concerning Moscow's proposal, in

26 Jan 62

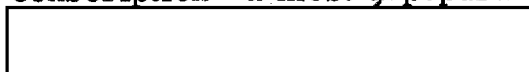
DAILY BRIEF

vii

a memorandum to West German Ambassador Kroll in Moscow, for bilateral talks with Bonn suggest that East Germany is having difficulty in adjusting its harsh anti - West German line--including military conscription and the drive to reduce dependence on West German imports--to the softer Soviet line on Germany. Ulbricht strongly accented East Germany's claims to equality with Bonn and stressed that any Soviet - West German talks could cover "only" relations with the USSR and West Germany and not German reunification. The Soviet memorandum says that this matter could "best" be handled in talks between the "two German states." Ulbricht also asserts that "development of good relations between the Soviet Union and West Germany presupposes renunciation by Bonn of all policies of conquest and revenge"--implying withdrawal from NATO.

The memorandum, however, suggests no "prerequisites" for a rapprochement. Ulbricht calls for "tangible guarantees" to show that Bonn is genuinely renouncing war and poses the signature of a peace treaty as a precondition, adding that a treaty with East Germany alone would fulfill this purpose. Ulbricht also clearly shows apprehension over Soviet intentions in his warning that the reactions of West German "ruling circles" to the Soviet memorandum indicate that Bonn would like to exploit the talks to East Germany's detriment. Finally, a large part of his remarks is devoted to proving that West German remilitarization has forced East Germany to institute general military conscription--a most unpopular measure with the East Germans.

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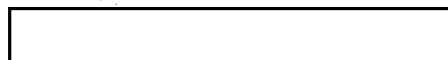
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(Available during the preceding week)

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Threat to US Security Interests in the Caribbean Area Over the Next Two Decades. USIB. SNIE 80-62. 3 pp. 17 Jan 62.



26 Jan 62

DAILY BRIEF

viii

Public Reaction to De-Stalinization

According to the embassy, the lecture was attended by some 70 persons, mostly of the older generation. Their query as to why Khrushchev holds three jobs is the first reported instance of an open comparison between him and Stalin. Khrushchev is first secretary of the party, premier of the USSR, and chairman of the central committee bureau for the Russian Federation; from 1941 until his death, Stalin likewise headed both the party and the government.

The audience also wanted to know whether "criminals" like Molotov would be brought to trial, why Stalin's excesses were called "mistakes" instead of "crimes," why he had not been "stopped by the army and the government," and why no court action has been taken against those who planned the assassination of former Leningrad party boss Sergey Kirov. Stalin used the Kirov murder as an excuse to begin the great purges of 1934-38.

The speaker seemed unable to provide satisfactory answers to any of these questions. Since the 22nd party congress last October, Soviet propagandists have sought--without apparent success--to anticipate and allay this kind of questioning about the nature of the regime by asserting that "collective leadership" and unspecified "guarantees" in the new party program and statutes make a return to terror and one-man dictatorship impossible. Continued groping for convincing answers suggests that the top leadership is still trying to establish a framework within which the ideological re-education of the Soviet people is to take place.

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